

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8143

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 4081

LIMDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR FOR LAZAR ARA/CEN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN, HO

SUBJECT: GOH ORGANIZATION DIFFICULTIES

1. AMBASSADOR NOTED ON RETURN FROM INSPECTION TRIP THAT ALTHOUGH THIRD COUNTRY SUPPLIES ARE BEING PARTIALLY MONITORED BY U.S. OPERATIONS CENTER AT LA MESA AIRPORT, SUCH FLIGHTS ARE BEING RAPIDLY UNLOADED AND DIRECTED TO CITY AND MILITARY WAREHOUSES WITHOUT INVENTORY AT AIRFIELD.

2. MILGP OFFICER INVOLVED IN OPERATIONS ALSO REPORTS:

(A) U.S. CONTINGENT AT LA MESA HAS LACKED SUFFICIENT U.S. SUPPLIED GOODS TO KEEP HELICOPTERS AND GOH AIRPLANES FULLY OCCUPIED IN DELIVERING SUPPLIES. SIMILAR SITUATION EXISTS AT GOLOSON. PROBLEM IS THAT ALL NON U.S. SUPPLIES ARRIVING AT AIRPORTS ARE LOADED ONTO TRUCKS AND HAULED INTO TOWN TO STORAGE AREAS. SUCH SUPPLIES ARE NOT UTILIZED BY GOH OFFICIALS TO SUPPLY AIRBORNE OPERATION;

(B) THERE ARE CONTINUING RUMORS OF ABUSES IN DELIVERY OF RELIEF SUPPLIES. COL BERRY LAINE, COMMANDER OF BRITISH RELIEF FORCES REPORTED THAT HE PERSONALLY INSPECTED AND IDENTIFIED FOR SALE ON A STREET CORNER RELIEF SUPPLIES
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THAT HE FLEW IN THE DAY BEFORE. MILGP NCO HAS ALSO

CONFIRMED THAT A SUPPLY TRUCK LOADED WITH THIRD COUNTRY MATERIALS NEVER ARRIVED AT ITS DOWNTOWN DESTINATION. MILGP HAS HEARD NO RUMORS OF MISUSE OF U.S. MATERIALS.

(C) REPORTERS ARE PRESENT IN GREAT QUANTITIES AND ARE EARERLY SEARCHING OUT REPORTS OF MISHANDLING OF RELIEF EFFORT.

3. COMMENT: WHILE MOST OF THE RUMORS ARE UNSUBSTANTIATED THIS TYPE OF THING IS A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF DISASTERS WHICH OCCUR IN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES WITH INEFFICIENT BUREAUCRACIES. WE FEEL THAT IF THIS SITUATION IS NOT CORRECTED IT COULD SERIOUSLY DAMAGE CONTINUING FOREIGN EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE HONDURAN PEOPLE. AMBASSADOR PERSONALLY HAS TALKED TO THE SOURCES OF SOME OF THESE RUMORS AND HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THEM ARE TRUE. HE JUST RETURNED FROM PARTICIPATING IN MORE FLIGHTS IN THE AREA. THIS INCLUDED INSPECTION OF DISTRIBUTION POINTS AND ACTUAL DELIVERY OF FOOD AND NURSES. LAST NIGHT HE MET WITH ALL OF THE FLIGHT CREWS AND OPERATIONS CENTER PERSONNEL AND QUERIED THEM AT LENGTH ABOUT THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS; ALSO, THEIR VIEW AS TO THE VALIDITY OF THE VARIOUS RUMORS. HE THEN PAID A VISIT TO COL. HERNANDEZ, DIRECTOR OF COPEN. THE RESULT OF THE LATTER CONVERSATION WILL BE SUBMITTED BY SEPARATE TELEGRAM. SANCHEZ

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